



### VMFA(AW)-224 Command Philosophy

It is a great privilege to serve alongside all of you as the Commanding Officer of the Fighting Bengals. From the commissioning of the Fighting Bengals during the Second World War through today, the Marines and Sailors of VMFA(AW)-224 have served the nation with distinction and forged a legacy of excellence. It is our duty to uphold this legacy and to be prepared to fight and win our nations battles now, and in the future. Four guiding principles will enable us in this pursuit:

**Be The Most Ready when the Nation is Least Ready:** The mission of the Bengals is to support the MAGTF commander by providing supporting arms coordination, conducting multi-sensor imagery, and destroying surface targets and enemy aircraft day or night, under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint, or combined operations. Executing this mission and winning in combat requires well-trained aircrew, quality maintenance, and ready Marines. Every minute of flight time, every turn of the wrench, and every bullet we fire needs to count.

**Brilliance in the Basics:** The only way we will be able to accomplish our mission as a unit is if we have a solid foundation in the basics. This means following NATOPS and SOPs, conducting maintenance by the book, and adhering to professional standards across the board. With greater experience and responsibility, a focus on the basics becomes even more important, not less. We never outgrow the need to do things right the first time and every time.

**Take Care of Each Other:** The best procedures in the world will not lead to victory unless we also have ready Marines and Sailors working together as a team. In combat, we fly with a wingman to maximize effectiveness and watch out for threats. In peacetime, both on and off duty, we need to do the same thing. Threats range from hazards on the flight line to bad decisions on liberty, and we need to work together to avoid them all. Taking care of each other also includes taking care of our families. Sometimes the greatest burdens of our profession fall on them.

**Keep our Honor Clean:** Do the right thing even when no one is looking, both on and off duty. In an immediate and obvious sense, this means no stealing, lying, hazing, illegal drug use, physical or sexual assault, child or spousal abuse, or intentional disregard for procedures or regulations, especially when it endangers others. There is no tolerance for these things in the Bengal family. Doing the right thing is not always obvious, though. When in doubt, we will remember our core values and follow our conscience. We will not only do this as individuals, but also as a team. Honest mistakes will happen from time to time. What is important is that we own up to them and learn from them together.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. P. Shand".

M. P. SHAND,  
Commanding Officer, VMFA(AW)-224

30 October 2014